



Mr. Reginald C. Matthews  
Airspace and Rules Division  
ATA-400  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Mr. Matthews:

The following comments on the final rule extending for a third time the effective date of many of the provisions of the December 31, 1996 version of SFAR 50-2. These comments are submitted on behalf of the Sierra Club, the Grand Canyon Trust, Friends of the Grand Canyon, and Grand Canyon River Guides.

Since this is the third delay in the implementation of routes and other provisions issued in December 1996, we incorporate by reference the comments already submitted on that rule and each of the two earlier delays. In addition, we incorporate by reference the comments submitted in response to the Supplemental Environmental Assessment: Special Flight Rules in the Vicinity of Grand Canyon National Park (June 1999); Modification of the Dimensions of the Grand Canyon National Park Special Flight Rules Area and Flight Free Zones (July 1, 1999); Commercial Routes for the Grand Canyon National Park (July 1, 1999); Commercial Air Tour Limitations in the Grand Canyon National Park Special Flight Rules Area (July 1, 1999).

The previous delays in implementation of SFAR 50-2 were premised on the need for more discussion of the new routes and flight free zones, and concern over adequate training and safety measures. The latest delay appears to be premised on the idea that a new route structure proposed last July is being finalized and will be out sometime soon. In essence, the relevant provisions of the SFAR has been held in limbo so long that they have been superseded without ever going into effect.

It is worth noting that unless it has undergone some radical revisions, the new route structure the FAA is now finalizing will also fall far short of the meeting any definition of substantial restoration of natural quiet. At present there appears to be no plan at all to

actually achieve the substantial restoration required by the Overflights Act of 1986, P.L. 100-91.

Unfortunately, the FAA's latest extension of SFAR 50-2 exemplifies the agency's longstanding pattern of delay in addressing aircraft noise at the Grand Canyon National Park. A rule which did not meet the statutory standard is being replaced, without ever going into effect, by one which does not meet the statutory standard. It is long past time for the agency to step up to the plate on this issue.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

Robert B. Wiygul